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ABSTRACT

A report is given of a 1987 survey of teachers in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). Data were obtained from 580 full-time classroom teachers in three elementary schools, two junior high schools, and one senior high school. The focus of the survey was on teacher attrition rates and turnover. Results indicated a high percentage of dissatisfaction with teaching in DCPS. Major issues, cited consistently by teachers as influencing resignation decisions included: (1) limited salary schedule and other benefits; (2) high amount of required non-instructional duties; (3) insufficient material resources and physical facilities; (4) inadequate growth potential, lack of rewards, and little autonomy; (5) administration-related problems; (6) lack of status and respect; (7) discipline problems; (8) lack of parental and community support; and (9) prevalence of low morale and "burnout." A copy of the survey questionnaire is appended, as well as tables displaying data summaries from the present and former surveys of DCPS teachers. (JD)

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STUDY OF DCPS TEACHER ATTRITION (DROPOUT) PATTERNS

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May 1988

SP030283

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District of Columbia Public Schools

Study of DCPS Teacher Attrition (Dropout) Patterns

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May 1988

Teacher Dropout

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Summary of Findings:

Teacher "Dropout" Study

Study Overview

Current educational literature offers two competing interpretations of the role teacher attrition may play in classroom staffing efforts. These interpretations are discussed below.

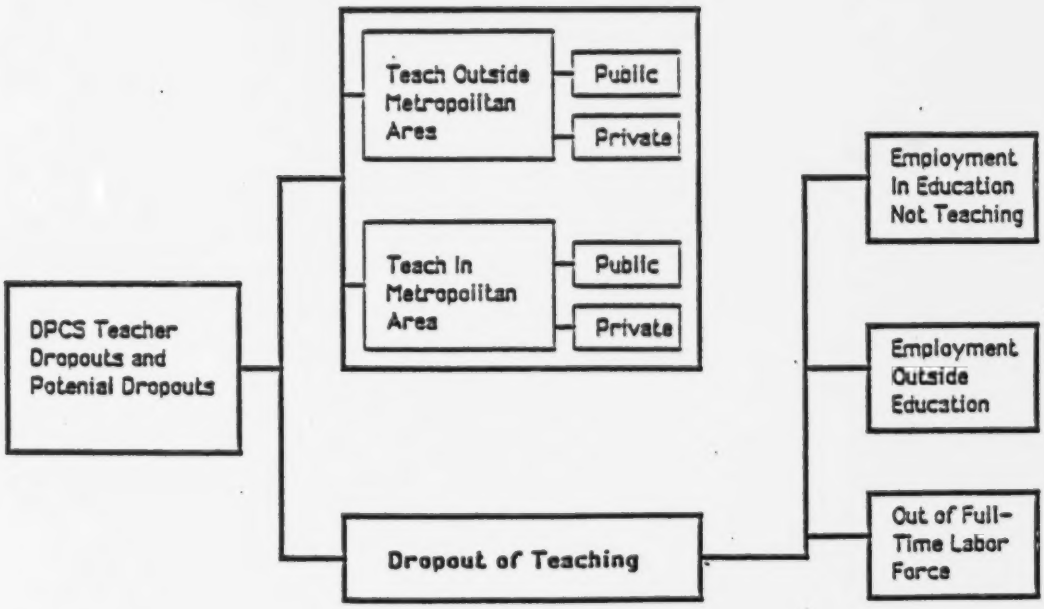
On one hand, the 1985 and 1986 Metropolitan Life Surveys of American Teachers indicated that more than half of the nation's teachers had seriously considered leaving the classroom, and nearly one third is likely to leave within a five year period. These widely publicized figures focused attention on the issue of teacher "dropout" and fueled fears that large numbers of experienced teachers would be lost to professions more attractive than teaching. Such concerns are heightened in the context of anticipated teacher shortages. Given shrinking teacher preparation program enrollments (Gerald, 1985) diminishing pools of non-practicing teachers, and rising teacher-retirement and student enrollments rates, the loss of a sizeable portion of the current mid-career teaching force could devastate efforts to staff schools. Calls for reform of the teacher profession, such as those voiced in the recent Holmes Group (1986) and Carnegie Foundation (1986) reports, cite this interpretation of research when presenting rationales for proposed policy changes.

On the other hand, Feistritzer (1986:7) points out that a turnover of one-third of the teaching force within a five-year period is about normal, when compared with historical turnover trends for teachers. Furthermore, she notes, national teacher attrition hovers around six percent annually--this rate is lower than that for all professional specialties (11%). Reacting to findings reported in the Metropolitan Life Survey (1986), she concludes, "...the fact that 49 percent of teachers said that they had never considered leaving for a job in another field is pretty amazing." From her perspective, current teacher attrition trends are not likely to precipitate severe teacher shortages. Her position is supported by the research of Grissmer and Kirby (1987) who maintain that mid-career professionals are least likely to leave their established career paths and Zerkin (1985) who suggests that the market has historically responded to teacher shortages.

Clearly, evidence on teacher attrition patterns discussed in the literature has relevance to the DCPS context. However, Grissmer and Kirby (1987) remind educators that findings from national studies of teacher attrition can not be directly applied

to local educational settings: national studies focus on patterns of attrition in the teaching profession, at the local level teachers may resign from given classroom positions in order to teach elsewhere--in another school district, another state, or in a private school. Further, Grissmer and Kirby acknowledge that, in times of teacher shortages, teacher mobility across school districts is likely to increase. DCPS attrition patterns may be particularly sensitive to the availability of classroom positions in neighboring school districts, while also being subject to factors associated with teacher attrition at the national level such as, the health of the private sector job market. Figure 1 below displays career options available to former teachers who voluntarily resigned from DCPS classrooms and for current DCPS teachers considering voluntary resignation.

Figure 1*
Alternative Career Paths Available to Former and Current DCPS Teachers in Reference to Voluntary Resignation



*Adapted from Grissmer and Kirby (1987: 9)

Figure 1 indicates that former DCPS teachers and potential dropouts can choose to: (1) continue teaching outside DCPS, (2) leave teaching for alternative employment in education (for example, in educational administration) or outside education (possibly in the private sector), or (3) dropout of the full-time labor force (perhaps temporarily, i.e. for child-rearing purposes). As Grismer and Kirby (1987) point out, each alternative career path attracts teachers away from classrooms for different reasons--some of which reflect on the perceived quality of salary and working conditions offered by one system in comparison with other systems; while other resignation reasons are a function of personal goals, the desire for advancement, or family commitments.

Specific teacher population characteristics and environmental context features must be considered in studying DCPS attrition trends in order to gauge the impact of voluntary resignations on future staffing demands. First, neighboring school districts have undertaken aggressive recruitment strategies, offering salaries above DCPS levels and opportunities to work under the preferred conditions associated with suburban school systems. DCPS teachers have greater access to classroom positions in surrounding school districts than had been the case in the past. Secondly, neighboring school systems, like systems across the country, have adopted affirmative action recruitment efforts. Thirdly, as in most school districts, the DCPS teaching force is largely comprised of females, for whom access to careers outside education has greatly increased in the last decade. DCPS female teachers who chose the teaching profession for lack of other options may now be inclined to pursue other professional career paths.

Thus, although DCPS teacher attrition rates appear to follow national trends, with an average turnover of about six percent for school years 1981-82 through 1985-86 Feistritzer (1986-:7). Legitimate concerns have been raised over future teacher attrition rates. In order for DCPS to assess the impact of voluntary attrition on staffing needs, the system must investigate the strength of contextual influences on various subgroups in its teaching force.

The Study Design

The DCPS, Division of Quality Assurance (DQA) undertook a two-pronged study of its teacher dropout patterns. The study design is discussed below.

First, DQA surveyed a sample of teachers currently serving in DCPS to ascertain their plans for continuing as DCPS teachers and to identify factors that influence resignation decisions. (See Appendix A for the questionnaire.) In this study, three

elementary schools, two junior high schools, and one senior high school were randomly selected from each region in the District. All full-time classroom teachers in the 6 selected schools were asked to complete the survey. This yielded a sample of 1006 teachers--264 elementary and 742 secondary teachers. When responses from teachers who were eligible for disability or age retirement were excluded, there were data available from 580, or about 58 percent, of the sample (See Appendix B).

A review of the background characteristics for this group of respondents suggests that it may not be fully representative of all DCPS teachers. While the ratio of male to female respondents (21% versus 79%) is consistent with the gender distribution of the DCPS teaching force, secondary school teachers (63% of the respondents) are overrepresented in the sample. Further, at the secondary level, mathematics and science teachers are overrepresented. (Respondent data are presented in Appendix B to this section.) These factors must be taken into account when the findings are presented below since, according to the national-level research literature, secondary teachers--and in particular, teachers of secondary mathematics and sciences--are most likely to leave the teaching profession.

The second piece of the "dropout" study conducted by DQA surveyed former DCPS teachers--teachers who left DCPS classroom positions prior to May 1987 for reasons other than retirement or disability. Because accurate identification of former teachers who fall into this category was not possible, surveys were mailed to all teachers who were dropped from the payroll during the school years 1984-85 to 1985-86, and 1985-86 to 1986-87. Five hundred and thirty seven survey packages were mailed out; 105 were not deliverable; and 127 were returned, of which 45 met the study criteria (that is, 45 surveys were returned by former teachers who resigned voluntarily from the system prior to retirement). Results from this study must be interpreted very cautiously. Accordingly, the summary of findings to be presented below will include only the most salient data from the survey of former teachers. (The survey instrument is presented in Appendix C and the results are presented in Appendix D.)

Study Findings

The most striking result from the survey of current teachers (See Appendix B) is that over one-quarter of the respondents (26%) were considering resignation at the end of the last school year. This percentage of respondents indicating thoughts of resignation within two months (the end of the school year) nearly doubles national rates for attrition plans over a two year period (14%, according to Louis Harris and Associates, 1986: 11). Furthermore, almost two-thirds (57%) of this group of DCPS survey respondents indicated that they were "somewhat" to "very certain"

of their plans to leave the system. The fact that 85 teachers out of 580 participating in the survey were seriously thinking of resignation and another 63 teachers were considering this possibility suggests that some substantial portion of DCPS teachers is quite dissatisfied with teaching in DCPS. This finding clearly warrants further probing of the data to determine (1) what types of DCPS teachers are most prone toward dropout, (2) what career options DCPS teachers are hoping to pursue after resignation, and (3) what factors in DCPS influence resignation decisions. Results from the survey data cross tabulations and content analysis of comments offered in open-ended survey questions will be presented in these three groupings below.

Characteristics of Teachers Considering Resignation

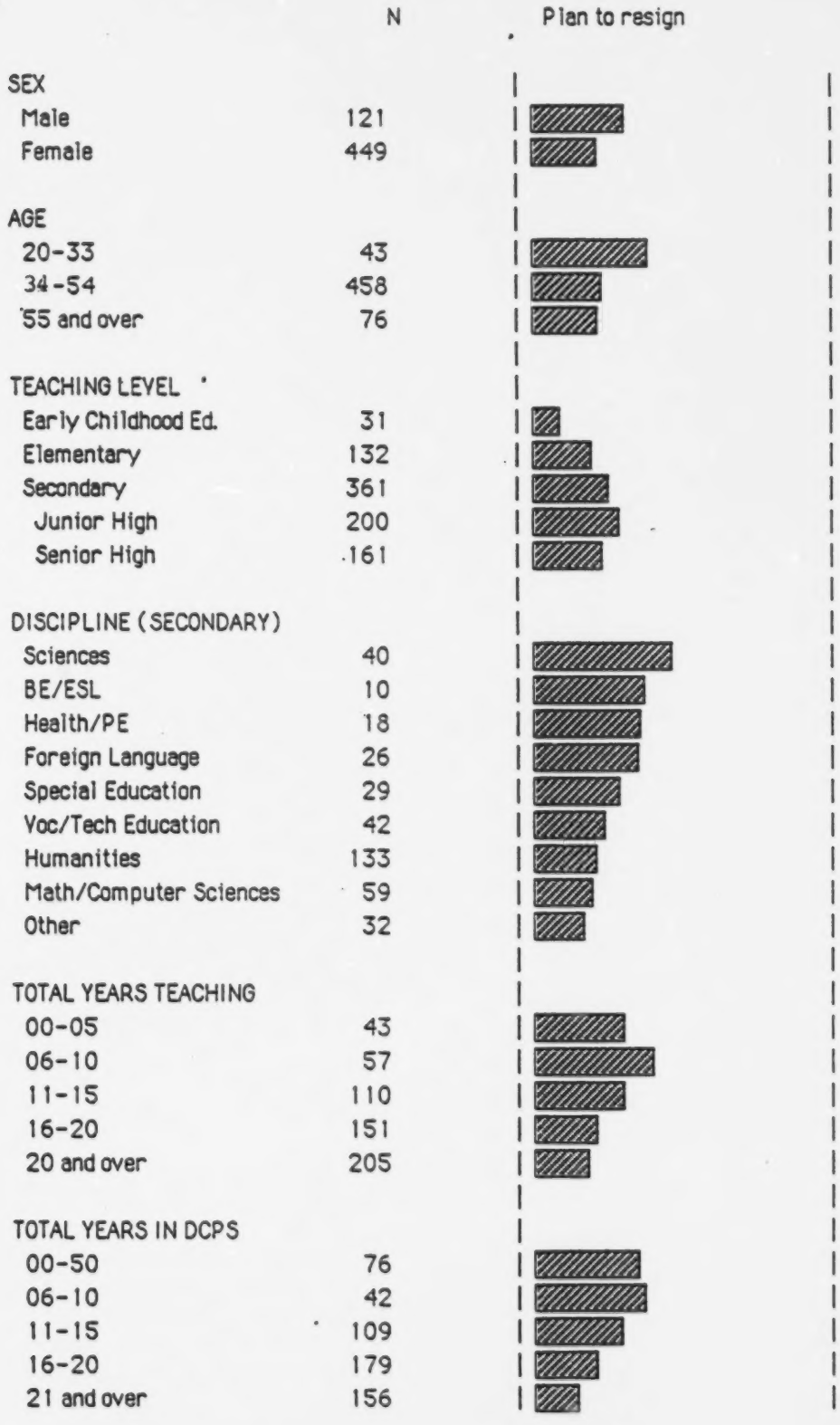
The characteristics of the respondents considering resignation are presented in Table B2 and summarized in Figure 2. As shown on the table, males are somewhat more inclined toward resignation (34%) than females (24%). Nearly twice as many (42%) of the youngest respondents are considering resignation as those over age 33 (24%). Similarly, the respondents with 10 or fewer years of DCPS teaching experience show the most frequent incidence of considering resignation--38 percent of respondents with 0 to 5 years, and 40 percent of respondents with 6 to 10 years of DCPS service have thoughts of quitting. As years of DCPS experience increase beyond 10, percentages of respondents considering resignation decrease steadily. These findings parallel results from national attrition studies, summarized to Grissmer and Kirby (1987). Generally speaking, younger members of the teaching force have greater flexibility in changing jobs because their personal commitments to a given position are less influential than those of mid-career teachers who have families and homes. For males, departure from classroom positions may be associated with head-of-household responsibilities which push them toward positions that offer greater monetary rewards. Also, historically, males have had greater access to advancement into educational administrative positions.

Table B2 also shows that larger percentages of secondary school respondents (28%), especially junior high school teachers (31%), indicate thoughts of resignation than teachers of younger students (10% for early childhood and 22% for elementary teacher-respondents.) However, the research suggests that attrition is highest among junior high school teachers because adolescents in this age group are the most difficult to work with.

Finally, science teachers at the secondary level rank highest of all for potential attrition. Fully 50 percent of these respondents said that they were thinking of quitting at the end of the school year. Somewhat surprisingly, relatively few math teachers in the sample (22%) indicate thoughts of

Figure 2

Current Pans to Resign, Profile



resignation. This is surprising because, nationally, mathematics teachers are reported to be in one of the highest risk categories for attrition. The DCPS survey results for math teacher-respondents may reflect sample bias, given that Grissmer, 1987, found that math teachers had the second highest attrition rates in the DCPS teaching force for school year 1981-82 through 1985-86. Conversely, these findings might suggest that the DCPS mathematics teaching force has stabilized high attrition.

Employment Choices for DCPS Teacher "Dropouts"

The DCPS survey asked respondents who were thinking of leaving to indicate their future employment plans (see Table B3). The results from this survey item show that while the largest portion (37%) of respondents thinking of resignation hopes to find employment outside the field of education, an almost equal number of the respondents (34%) seeks teaching positions with other districts or private schools. The latter finding is disconcerting, given that a 1981 National Education Association (NEA) survey showed that only 14 percent of teachers who planned to resign from a classroom position hoped to find employment teaching in another school district (as reported by Grissmer and Kirby, 1987: 25).

Looking at particular types of teachers responding to this item, 60 percent of the males, 59 percent of the younger teachers (ages 20 to 33) and 42 percent of the junior high teachers indicated that they planned to look for teaching positions outside the District. That is, teachers in the high-risk attrition groups are not necessarily dissatisfied with teaching, but with their current jobs. These findings raise some concern. If neighboring school systems experience the enrollment increases predicted, teaching opportunities outside DCPS will be more readily available. According to the literature, school systems can do little to reverse resignation decisions based on personal choices to pursue career advancement or for family reasons. However, resignation decisions directed toward transfer into neighboring school districts can be influenced by policy changes that improve teacher salaries and working conditions. If DCPS can alter perceptions that salaries and working conditions in neighboring school systems are better for teachers through policy revision, the District may be able to retain teachers attracted by neighboring school districts (one third of those considering resignation in this sample.)

Causes for DCPS Teacher "Dropout"

Two reasons cited by respondents on the survey of current teachers (see Table B4) account for more than two-thirds of the reasons given for considering resignation; namely, dissatisfaction with salary schedule (30%) and dissatisfaction

with DCPS working conditions (31%). Furthermore, these reasons are most prominent in resignation causes cited by teachers in many relevant subgroups, shifting only in terms of their first or second levels of importance: majorities of male (41%); older teachers, aged 55 and above, (44%); and junior high school teacher - respondents (44%) each cite working conditions in the District as the major reason for their considering resignation. Concurrently, majorities of the respondents ages 20 to 33 (41%) and elementary (46%) and senior high (35%) teacher-respondents cite salary as the major cause for considering resignation. The majority of female respondents were almost evenly split in citing dissatisfaction with salary (29%) and dissatisfaction with working conditions (27%) as the chief reasons for resignation. The only exception to this finding is apparent in the younger respondent group (ages 20-33), where the second most frequently cited reason for considering attrition was the residency requirement (29%). Working conditions ranked third (12%) for the younger group.

In fact, the literature as well as responses to an open-ended question on the DCPS survey suggest that "salary" and "working conditions" issues are inter-related. To quote one DCPS teacher-respondent:

> It is my belief that all teachers are frustrated with our low pay and lack of status. Since status in the U.S. is usually associated with money, there is little hope of an increase in respect for teaching without a commensurate salary increase.

Although the literature generally acknowledges needs for improvement in teacher salaries (see in particular National Education Association, 1987), the literature is less instructive in the area of necessary improvement in working conditions required for teacher retention--perhaps because "working conditions" issues involve rather intangible causes of distress or frustration for teachers. For this reason, the DCPS survey attempted to probe aspects of DCPS working conditions that have been cited in the literature as sources of irritation to teachers.

Conclusions

Not surprisingly, DCPS respondents to both the survey of former teachers and the survey of current teachers cited the same basic set of concerns in answering both forced-choice items and open-ended questions. Furthermore, the respondents' concerns mirror those found in national studies and in previous studies of DCPS teachers' reasons for considering resignation (see Task Force on Merit Pay for Teachers, 1984: 158). Major issues, cited consistently by teachers as influencing resignation decisions, involve:

- Limited salary schedule and other benefits
- The amount of required non-instructional duties
- Insufficient material resources and physical facilities
- Inadequate growth potential, lack of rewards for exemplary service, and little control over one's performance
- Administration-Related problems
- Lack of status and respect
- Student Population-Related concerns (e.g. discipline and attitude problems)
- Lack of parent and community support
- Prevalence of low morale and "burnout"

Former teacher response patterns to the survey (see Table D1) may help in gauging the importance of the above-referenced factors in DCPS resignation decisions. Less than 5 percent (4.5%) of the former DCPS teachers' cited "dissatisfaction with the salary schedule" as their major consideration in deciding to resign while almost half of the former teachers (45.5%) cited "DCPS working conditions" as the single most influential factor in deciding to resign. It is worthy of note that a full quarter of these former teachers now continue to teach in school systems outside DCPS.

In terms of working conditions, DCPS teacher-respondents were explicit in voicing complaints, as is evident in the quotes presented below:

> I wish to leave because of... the assigning of too, too many non-instructional tasks. Keeping a folder on each student (over 130 folders) and posting objectives for each student has not and will not improve student achievement. We need more student to student instruction time--not more paperwork!!

> No one will ever be able to prove to me that it takes a year or more to deliver supplies (i.e., textbooks and instructional materials) to the classroom teacher. In surrounding counties, about two weeks from ordering, the supplies are delivered to the classroom teacher's classroom.

> I think that poor discipline and lack of administrative support for dealing with disciplinary problems are major factors (in teacher attrition). Teachers are worn out by

> the demands of an unruly, disorderly environment. Teachers are made responsible for maintaining discipline in classrooms and hallways, but we do not [have] authority that is commensurate with the responsibility.
>
> Teachers are driven, not appreciated...Asked to be mother, father, counselor, probation officer, psychologist, social worker, secretary. [We] must accept anything that comes through the door, especially ill-prepared students that have no intention of putting forth any effort into the educational experience. We do them [the students] a great disservice by accepting these conditions.

These quotes reveal a sense of true exasperation felt by the responding DCPS teachers. While some of the concerns expressed in these quotes reflect the feelings of teachers nation-wide, some issues can be addressed by revisions in DCPS policy. Fortunately, less than ten percent of the respondents considering resignation (9%) say that nothing could convince them to continue teaching in DCPS. It appears that DCPS teacher retention can be improved through implementation of short-and long-term policies that respond to teacher-voiced causes of professional frustration. In the near future, DCPS could simply consider changing material and physical resource acquisition procedures for classroom teachers. For long range impact, DCPS might explore options for delegating to teachers authority in educational decision-making by adopting models for "professionalizing teaching" in the form of teacher career ladders and professional development programs. The longer-range strategy is called for by both educational policy makers and educational researchers; and, it is likely to serve the needs and wishes of DCPS teachers, as expressed in the words of a DCPS teacher:

> We are tired of being educational guinea pigs and recipients of every vagary and tergiversation rampant in educational and sociological milieu. The bottom line is that we are not treated as true professionals by the people we serve or by those who control our workplace. At best, we are babysitters; at worst we are considered untalented drones with vitiated degrees. Teacher morale and motivation have reached its nadir because many of us feel alienated and unappreciated and our employers have done nothing substantial to alter those feelings.

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Survey of Current (Spring 1987) DCPS Teachers to Investigate Attrition Patterns-(Questionnaire)

Survey of Potential Attritees

Part I

1. At the end of the current school year (SY 1986-87) will you be leaving your classroom position because of mandatory retirement or a health-related problem?

___ Yes (Please stop here and turn in this survey.)

___ No (Continue on.)

2. Are you:

___ Female

___ Male

3. How old are you?

___ 20-26 ___ 41-47

___ 27-33 ___ 48-54

___ 34-40 ___ 55 or above

4. What is your marital status?

___ Single/Divorced/Separated/Widowed

___ Married

5. Do you have dependent children in your home?

___ Yes

___ No

6. What is your current teaching assignment? (Check one only.)

___ Early childhood (Pre-kindergarten or kindergarten)

___ Elementary school (grades 1-6)

___ Junior high school (grades 7-9)

___ Senior high school (grades 10-12)

___ Bilingual education/ESL (grades K-12)

___ Special education (grades K-12)

___ Other (Please specify.)_____

7. If you teach in a classroom at the secondary level (in a middle school, junior or senior high school), please check the primary subject area you currently teach. (Check one only.)

___	Bilingual education/ESL	___	Biological sciencies
___	Business/secretarial courses	___	Computer science
___	English/language arts	___	Fine arts (drama, music, art)
___	Foreign language	___	Health/physical education
___	Industrial arts	___	Mathematics
___	Physical sciences	___	Social science (history, psychology, civics, etc.)
___	Special education		

___ Other (Please specify.) _____

8. Including this school year, how many years have you been a full-time classroom teacher?

Number of years ___

9. Including this school year, how many years have you been employed as a full-time classroom teacher in the District of Columbia Public Schools?

Number of years ___

Part II

10. Are you thinking of quitting or voluntarily leaving classroom teaching in DCPS at the end of this current school year (SY 1986-87)?

___ Yes (Go to question 11)

___ No (Please stop here and turn in this survey.)

11. How certain are you of these plans to quit or leave full-time teaching? (Check one only.)

___ Very certain ___ Somewhat certain ___ Uncertain

12. What are you thinking of doing if you leave your DCPS teaching position? (Check one only.)

___ I plan to seek a non-teaching position in education.

___ I plan to seek a teaching position with another school system or in a private school.

___ I plan to seek a job outside the education field.

___ I do not plan to look for full-time, paid employment.

___ Other: (Please specify.) _____

_____

13. Which one of the following statements best describes your major reason for thinking about leaving your teaching assignment in DCPS? We know that often there is more than one reason for considering quitting teaching, but please give us your single most important reason. (Check one only.)

___ I am dissatisfied with my salary (potential).

___ The low status of teaching as a profession distresses me.

___ My current working conditions discourage me from continuing to teach DCPS.

___ My family is relocating outside the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

___ I may no longer be able to meet the District's residency requirements for teachers.

___ I want to devote more time to raising my family.

___ I've decided that teaching was the wrong profession for me. I can apply my skills better in a different kind of job.

___ I never intended to teach forever. The time has come to move on.

___ Other: (Please specify.) _____

_____

14. In addition to the reason cited in Question 13, to what extent have the following negative issues contributed to your current thoughts about leaving your classroom position in DCPS: (Circle one number for each item.)

	Not at all				To a great extent
The low status of teaching as a profession	1	2	3	4	5
Student discipline problems	1	2	3	4	5
The lack of support given to classroom teachers by building administrators	1	2	3	4	5
The lack of support given to classroom teachers by the District-level administration	1	2	3	4	5
The lack of co-worker support	1	2	3	4	5
The excess of non-instructional responsibilities assigned to classroom teachers	1	2	3	4	5
Inadequate material resources and physical facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Inadequate salary (potential)	1	2	3	4	5

15. Which one of the following incentives could be most influential in convincing you to remain as a classroom teacher in DCPS? (Check one only.)

___ An increase in my salary beyond the limits now set by the DCPS teachers' salary scale

___ An appointment to teach on a part-time basis

___ A re-assignment to teach in another school in DCPS

___ A reduction of the non-instructional demands placed on me as a teacher

___ A waiver of the District residency requirements for teachers

___ A sabbatical for training in an additional specialty area or for updating my professional skills

___ An improvement of the public's opinion of classroom teachers

___ No incentive would cause me to reconsider my decision to leave teaching in DCPS.

___ Other: (Please specify.) _____

_____

16. We'd like to hear what you think are the major reasons that DCPS teachers choose to leave the classroom.

_____

_____

_____

****

*

* Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. *

*

* Please place the survey in the envelope provided and return*

* it to your school office for collection and forwarding. Do *

* not put your name on the envelope. *

*

****

Appendix B:

Data Tables and Summaries for "Potential Attrition" Survey

Appendix B

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A Survey of Current Teachers, Regarding Plans to Resign Voluntarily: Preliminary Results

Return Profile:

Usable Responses	N=580

Respondent Profile Data (From "Usable" Responses Only)

1. Full-time DCPS teaching assignment	
Elementary	28.3%
Prek-K, K	05.4%
Grades 1-6	22.9%
Secondary	62.7%
Junior High School	34.7%
Senior High School	28.0%
2. Subject Area Specialties (where applicable)	
Humanities (English, Social Studies, etc.)	34.2%
Special Education	11.8%
Mathematics/Computer Sciences	15.2%
Foreign Languages	06.7%
ESL/Bilingual Education	04.2%
Sciences	10.5%
Physical Education	04.6%
Vocational/Industrial/Technical Education	10.8%
Other	08.2%
3. Sex	
Male	21.2%
Female	78.8%

4.	Age	
	20-33	07.4%
	34-54	79.4%
	55 & over	13.2%
5.	Marital Status	
	Married	57.4%
	Unmarried (or separated)	42.4%
6.	Dependents in Home	
	Have dependents in home	53.0%
	Do not have dependents in home	47.0%
7.	Total years of full-time teaching experience:	
	00-05	07.6%
	06-10	10.1%
	11-15	19.5%
	16-20	26.6%
	21 & over	36.2%
8.	Years of DCPS full-time teaching experience	
	00-05	13.5%
	06-10	07.6%
	11-15	19.4%
	16-20	31.9%
	20 & over	27.8%

9. Intentions to resign voluntarily

Plan to leave	26.0% (N=151)
Do not plan to leave	74.0%

10. Certainty of Plans

Very certain	18.2%
Somewhat certain	39.2%
Uncertain	42.6%

11. Alternative Employment Plans

In the Field of education (non-teaching)	18.3%
Outside education	37.3%
Full-time teaching outside DCPS	33.8%
Not planning to work	02.8%
Other	07.7%

12. The extent to which specified factors contribute to plans to resign from full-time, DCPS classroom teaching

SCALE

1 = This is greatly influencing my decision to resign from teaching in DCPS.
2
3 = This is moderately influencing my decision to resign from teaching in DCPS.
4
5 = This is not influencing my decision to resign from teaching in DCPS at all.

FACTORS

	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
o The public's perception of teaching as a low-status profession	39.1	14.5	24.6	04.3	17.4
o Student discipline problems	44.6	14.1	15.8	09.4	15.8

o	Lack of support given to teachers by building administrators	28.6	21.4	25.0	08.6	16.4
o	Lack of support given to teachers by District-level administration	33.0	19.1	23.4	10.6	13.5
o	Lack of co-worker support in my school	05.8	05.8	12.4	25.5	50.4
o	Required non-instructional duties	51.8	19.9	11.3	07.8	09.2
o	Insufficient material resources/physical facilities	47.1	12.9	17.1	10.0	12.9
o	The Limited salary schedule and other benefits	51.8	20.6	09.9	07.1	10.6

13. Major reason for planning to resign from DCPS teaching position

Dissatisfaction with salary	29.9%
Low status of teaching as a profession	10.2%
Working conditions in DCPS	31.4%
Relocation outside the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.	--
The District's residency requirements	08.0%
Family	--
No intention to teach for more than a few years	08.8%
Wrong profession	01.5%
Other	10.2%

14. Most influential incentives to continue to teach in DCPS classroom

An increase in salary beyond current earnings	40.7%
An appointment to teach on a part-time	

basis	04.4%
An assignment to teach in a different school in DCPS	05.9%
A reduction of the non-instructional duties	14.1%
A waiver of the District's residency requirement	07.4%
Tuition support for training	08.1%
An improvement of the public's opinion of DCPS classroom teaching	01.5%
Nothing	08.9%
Other	08.9%

Table B2

Current Teachers' Plans to Continue Teaching in DCPS

		Plan to Resign	Plan to Continue
Sex			
Male	N=121	34%	66%
Female	N=449	24%	76%
Age			
20-33	N=043	42%	58%
34-54	N=458	25%	75%
55 and over	N=076	24%	76%
Teaching Level			
Early Childhood	N=031	10%	90%
Elementary	N=132	22%	78%
Secondary	N=361	28%	72%
Junior High	N-200	31%	69%
Senior High	N=161	25%	75%
Discipline (Secondary)			
Sciences	N=040	50%	50%
BE/ESL	N=010	40%	60%
Health/PE	N=018	39%	61%
Foreign Language	N=026	38%	62%
Special Ed.	N=029	31%	69%
VocEd/Industrial/Tech	N=042	26%	74%
Humanities	N=133	23%	77%
Math/Comp. Sciences	N=059	22%	78%
Other	N=032	19%	81%

		Plan to Resign	Plan to Continue
Total Years of Full-Time Teaching			
00-05	N=043	33%	67%
06-10	N=057	44%	56%
11-15	N=110	33%	67%
16-20	N=151	23%	77%
21 and over	N=205	20%	80%
Years Teaching Full-Time in DCPS			
00-05	N=076	38%	62%
06-10	N=042	40%	60%
11-15	N=109	32%	68%
16-20	N=179	23%	77%
21 and over	N=156	16%	84%

Table B3

Future Employment Plans (Sex, Age, and Ed. Level)

	Males	Females
	N=40	N=98
FUTURE EMPLOYMENT PLANS		
Work in Ed., Non-Teaching	10%	21%
Teach Elsewhere	60%	23%
Work Outside Education	25%	42%
No Plans for Employment	0%	4%
Other	5%	9%

	AGE 20-33 N=17	AGE 34-54 N=108	AGE 55 & + N=17
FUTURE EMPLOYMENT PLANS			
Work in Ed., Non-Teaching	23%	17%	23%
Teach Elsewhere	59%	32%	18%
Work Outside Education	12%	44%	18%
No Plans for Employment	0%	0%	23%
Other	6%	6%	18%

	ECE/Elem N=32	Junior HS N=57	Senior HS N=37
FUTURE EMPLOYMENT PLANS			
Work in Ed., Non-Teaching	6%	23%	13%
Teach Elsewhere	25%	42%	32%
Work Outside Education	56%	28%	38%
No Plans for Employment	9%	0%	3%
Other	3%	7%	13%

Table B4

DEPARTURE REASONS (INCENTIVES AND AGE)

	Age 20-33 N=17	Age 34-54 N=104	Age 55 & + N=16	All Groups N=137
MAJOR REASON FOR PLANS TO LEAVE				
Salary	41.2%	30.8%	12.5%	29.9%
Status	5.9%	12.5%	0.0%	10.2%
Working Conditions	11.8%	32.7%	43.8%	31.4%
Relocation (Outside Metro Area)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Residency	29.4%	5.8%	0.0%	8.0%
Family	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Career Advancement	5.9%	6.7%	25.0%	8.8%
Teaching: Wrong Profession	5.9%	1.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Other	0.0%	10.6%	18.8%	10.2%
	Age 20-33 N=14	**Age 34-54 N=107**	**Age 55 & + N=14**	**All Groups N=135**
INCENTIVES TO CONTINUE				
Salary Increase	57.1%	40.2%	28.6%	40.7%
Part-Time	0.0%	3.7%	14.3%	4.4%
Reassignment	0.0%	7.5%	0.0%	5.9%
Reduction of Non-instr'l Duties	7.1%	14.0%	21.4%	14.1%
Waiver of Residency Requirements	21.4%	6.5%	0.0%	7.4%
Retraining/ Additional Training	7.1%	8.4%	7.1%	8.1%
Status Improvement	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	1.5%
Nothing	0.0%	9.3%	14.3%	8.9%
Other	7.1%	8.4%	14.3%	8.9%

DEPARTURE REASONS (INCENTIVES AND SEX)

	Males	Females
	N=40	N=98
MAJOR REASON FOR PLANNING TO LEAVE		
Salary	35%	29%
Status	5%	11%
Working Conditions	41%	27%
Relocation (Outside Metro Areas)	0%	0%
Residency	11%	7%
Family	0%	0%
Career Advancement	3%	10%
Teaching: Wrong Profession	3%	1%
Other	3%	14%
	Males N=36	Females N=96
INCENTIVES TO CONTINUE		
Salary Increase	50%	39%
Part-Time	0%	6%
Reassignment	8%	5%
Reduction of Non-instructional Duties	11%	16%
Waiver of Residency Requirements	11%	6%
Retraining/Additional Training	3%	9%
Status Improvement	3%	1%
Nothing	5%	9%
Other	8%	8%

DEPARTURE REASON (INCENTIVES AND LEVEL)

	ECE/ELEM	JUNIOR HS	SENIOR HS
	N=24	N=59	N=37
MAJOR REASON FOR PLANNING TO LEAVE			
Salary	46%	22%	35%
Status	4%	17%	8%
Working Conditions	21%	44%	19%
Relocation (Outside Metro Areas)	0%	0%	0%
Residency	4%	7%	14%
Family	0%	0%	0%
Career Advancement	13%	3%	3%
Teaching: Wrong Profession	0%	0%	3%
Other	13%	7%	19%

	ECE/ELEM	JUNIOR HS	SENIOR HS
	N=28	N=56	N=35
INCENTIVES TO CONTINUE			
Salary Increase	46%	36%	43%
Part-Time	7%	7%	0%
Reassignment	11%	5%	6%
Reduction of Non-instructional Duties	18%	18%	6%
Waiver of Residency Requirements	4%	7%	14%
Retraining/Additional Training	4%	9%	9%
Status Improvement	0%	2%	3%
Nothing	7%	7%	9%
Other	4%	9%	11%

FACTORS INFLUENCING RESIGNATION DECISIONS BY LEVEL

Issue/Level		N Resp.	1 (A lot)	2	3 (Some)	4	5 (Not)
STATUS							
	ECE/Elem	29	45%	21%	17%	0%	10%
	Junior HS	54	41%	15%	17%	9%	19%
	Senior HS	38	39%	13%	30%	3%	16%
DISCIPLINE							
	ECE/Elem	27	59%	11%	19%	4%	7%
	Junior HS	56	41%	16%	16%	14%	13%
	Senior HS	39	43%	10%	8%	10%	28%
BLDG. ADMIN.							
	ECE/Elem	27	24%	16%	33%	4%	7%
	Junior HS	58	36%	26%	19%	7%	12%
	Senior HS	39	21%	15%	31%	5%	28%
DISTRICT ADMIN.							
	ECE/Elem	27	40%	26%	22%	4%	7%
	Junior HS	59	34%	19%	20%	15%	12%
	Senior HS	39	26%	18%	23%	8%	26%
CO-WORKER SUPPORT							
	ECE/Elem	27	4%	11%	11%	30%	44%
	Junior HS	57	5%	2%	18%	14%	63%
	Senior HS	37	3%	8%	14%	38%	38%

Table B5 (Continued)

Issue/Level		N Resp.	1 (A lot)	2	3 (Some)	4	5 (Not)
NON-TCH. DUTIES							
	ECE/Elem	28	75%	7%	7%		11%
	Junior HS	57	51%	21%	11%	11%	7%
	Senior HS	40	42%	20%	15%	10%	13%
LACK OF RESOURCES							
	ECE/Elem	27	52%	11%	19%	11%	7%
	Junior HS	57	40%	11%	23%	11%	16%
	Senior HS	39	49%	23%	8%	5%	15%
SALARY							
	ECE/Elem	30	57%	27%	10%	3%	3%
	Junior HS	57	46%	23%	5%	12%	14%
	Senior HS	39	60%	13%	15%	5%	8%

Table B6

Summary of Reasons that Current Teachers Give for Considering Resignation

FACTORS	N	%
FACTORS INTERNAL TO TEACHING PERFORMANCE		
PROBLEMS DEALING WITH ADMINISTRATORS	50	15%
o In general (8%)		
o With administrators outside the building (1%)		
o With administrators in the building (2%)		
o Perceptions of favoritism and injustice (4%)		
LACK OF RESPECT AND LOW STATUS IN GENERAL	30	9%
INADEQUATE REWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND CONTROL	30	9%
o Lack of or inappropriate rewards/ incentives (2%)		
o Lack of opportunity for professional development (2%)		
o Lack of opportunity for advancement (2%)		
o Stifled creativity in teaching (1%)		
o Lack of access for teachers in temporary positions (1%)		
STUDENT SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS	42	13%
LACK OF PARENTAL SUPPORT	8	2%
INADEQUATE MATERIAL AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES	23	7%
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES	40	12%
LOW MORALE/BURNOUT IN GENERAL	14	4%
POOR WORKING CONDITIONS IN GENERAL	12	4%
Other	3	1%
FACTORS EXTERNAL TO TEACHING PERFORMANCE		
INADEQUATE SALARY AND BENEFITS	64	19%
THE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT	13	4%

Table B6 (Continued)

NOTES:
1. Missing cases = 28 (Number of respondents considering resignation who offered no comments)
2. Valid cases = 123 (Number of respondents considering resignation who offered comments)
3. Of the respondents who offered comments, they cited an average of 2.7 reasons for considering resignation. The total number of reasons produced in response to the survey item, "We'd like to hear what you think are the major reasons that DCPS teachers choose to leave the classroom," is 329.
4. Percents do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Appendix C:

Survey of Former DCPS Teachers (Questionnaire)

Questionnaire for Former Teachers

Directions

****

The survey consists of two parts. The first 10 questions address your teaching experience. The second 5 questions ask for background information that will help us to understand the differing motives for resignation expressed by various groups of former teachers.

****

NOTE: The survey has been designed specifically for people who resigned from DCPS classroom teaching positions before they become eligible for retirement. Please do not complete the survey if:

(1) You retired when you left your DCPS classroom position; OR

(2) You did not hold a full-time teaching position with DCPS; OR

(3) You are on temporary leave from your DCPS teaching position.

Simply check the box below and return the unanswered survey to this office in the stamped, pre-addressed envelope provided.

☐ I have not completed this survey for one of the reasons stated above.

****

A Survey of Former Teachers

1. When did you resign from your District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) teaching position?

   ☐ Between September 1, 1986, and the present

   ☐ Between September 1, 1985, and August 31, 1986

   ☐ Between September 1, 1984, and August 31, 1985

   ☐ Before September 1, 1984

2. What was your last full-time teaching assignment with DCPS?

   ☐ Elementary: (Please circle the grade you last taught.)

   Pre-Kindergarten Kindergarten 1 2 3 4 5 6

   ☐ Secondary: (Please indicate the subject(s) that you last taught.)

   _____ _____

   _____ _____

   ☐ Other: (Please specify.) _____

3. All together, for how many years did you teach full-time? (If you are currently teaching full-time outside DCPS, please include the current school year.)

   Number of years: _____

4. For how many years were you employed as a full-time classroom teacher for DCPS?

   Number of years: _____

5. Do you intend to return to full-time classroom teaching in DCPS?

   - ☐ Yes, I intend to return to teaching in DCPS.
   - ☐ No, I do not intend to return to teaching in DCPS.
   - ☐ I am not sure whether I will return to teaching in DCPS.

6. Where are you currently employed?

   - ☐ I work in a non-teaching position in the field of education.
   - ☐ I work **outside** the field of education.
   - ☐ I am a full-time teacher with a private school or another school system outside DCPS.
   - ☐ I am not currently a paid employee anywhere.

7. To what extent did each of the following factors contribute to your decision to resign from full-time classroom teaching in DCPS? Circle one option from the scale below for each factor:

SCALE

1 = This **greatly** influenced my decision to resign from teaching in DCPS.

2

3 = This **moderately** influenced my decision to resign from teaching in DCPS.

4

5 = This did **not** influence my decision to resign from teaching in DCPS **at all**.

FACTORS

• The public's perception of teaching as a low-status profession	1	2	3	4	5
• Student discipline problems	1	2	3	4	5
• Lack of support given to teachers by building administrators	1	2	3	4	5
• Lack of support given to teachers by District-level administration	1	2	3	4	5
• Lack of co-worker support in my school	1	2	3	4	5
• The non-instructional duties that I was required to carry out	1	2	3	4	5
• Insufficient material resources and physical facilities	1	2	3	4	5
• The limited salary schedule and other benefits	1	2	3	4	5

8. Which **one** of the following statements best describes your **major** reason for leaving your DCPS teaching position?

- ☐ I was dissatisfied with my salary schedule.
- ☐ The low status of teaching as a profession distressed me.
- ☐ Working conditions in DCPS discouraged me.
- ☐ My family relocated outside the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.
- ☐ I was no longer able to meet the District's residency requirements.
- ☐ I wanted to devote more time to my family.
- ☐ I never intended to teach for more than a few years. The time had come to move on.
- ☐ I decided that teaching was the wrong profession for me. I can apply my talents better in a different kind of job.
- ☐ Other: (Please specify.) _____

_____

9. Which **one** of the following incentives might be most influential in convincing you to return to classroom teaching in DCPS?

- ☐ An increase in salary beyond my current earnings
- ☐ An appointment to teach on a part-time basis
- ☐ An assignment to teach in a different school in DCPS
- ☐ A reduction of the non-instructional duties associated with a teaching position
- ☐ A waiver of the District's residency requirements for teachers
- ☐ Tuition support for training in an additional area of specialization or for updating my professional skills
- ☐ An improvement of the public's opinion of classroom teaching in DCPS
- ☐ No incentive would attract me back to classroom teaching in DCPS.
- ☐ Other: (Please specify.) _____

_____

10. We'd like to hear what you think are the major reasons that DCPS teachers choose to leave the classroom. Please summarize your opinions below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Are you:

☐ Male ☐ Female

12. What is your age?

☐ 20-26 ☐ 41-47

☐ 27-33 ☐ 48-54

☐ 34-40 ☐ 55-above

13. What is your marital status?

☐ Married ☐ Single/Divorced/Separated/Widowed

14. Do you have dependent children in your home?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. May we contact you in the future to learn more from your insights and experiences from teaching in DCPS classrooms?

☐ Yes, my address is: (Name): _____

(Street): _____

(City/State): _____ (Zip): _____

(Home Phone): _____

(Work Phone): _____

☐ No, I would prefer that you **not** contact me again.

****

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please place the survey in the stamped, pre-addressed envelope provided and return it to this office: District of Columbia Public Schools, Division of Quality Assurance and Management Planning, 415 12th Street, N.W., Room 1013, Washington, DC, 20004 ATTENTION: M.V. IMPINK-HERNANDEZ

Appendix D:

Data Summaries for
Former Teachers' Survey

Table D

A Survey of Former Teachers:
Preliminary Results

Return Profile:

Usable Responses	N=45 (36% of returns)
Unusable Responses (Retired and Other)	N=80 (64% of returns)
Undeliverable	N=105
Unaccounted for Mailouts	N=2300

Respondent Profile Data (From "Usable" Responses Only)

1. Date of resignation from District of Columbia Public Schools	
Between September 1, 1986, and the present	09.3%
Between September 1, 1985, and August 31, 1986	58.1%
Between September 1, 1984, and August 31, 1985	20.9%
Before September 1, 1984	11.6%
2. Last full-time DCPS teaching assignment with DCPS	
Elementary	31.8%
Pre-K, K	04.5%
Grades 1-3	11.3%
Grades 4-6	06.8%
Secondary	47.7%
Other (Counselors, School Psychologists, Librarians, etc.)	20.5%
3. Subject Area Specialties (where applicable)	
Humanities (English, Social Studies, etc.)	15.9%
Special Education	13.6%
Mathematics/Computer Sciences	09.1%
Foreign Languages	06.8%

	ESL/Bilingual Education	06.8%
	Resource Teachers	06.8%
	Career Education	04.5%
	Sciences	02.3%
	Physical Education	02.3%
	Librarians	02.3%
	Counselors	02.3%
4.	Sex	
	Male	31.1%
	Female	68.9%
5.	Age	
	20-33	17.7%
	34-54	62.2%
	55 & over	20.0%
6.	Marital Status	
	Married	55.6%
	Unmarried (or separated)	44.4%
7.	Dependents in Home	
	Have dependents in home	51.1%
	Do not have dependents in home	48.9%
8.	Total years of full-time teaching experience:	
	00-05	18.2%
	06-10	20.4%
	11-15	25.0%
	16-20	18.2%
	20 & over	18.2%

9. Years of DCPS full-time teaching experience

00-05	11.0%
06-10	22.0%
11-15	27.0%
16-20	20.0%
20 & over	09.0%

10. Intentions to return to full-time DCPS classroom teaching

Intend to return to teaching in DCPS.	11.4$
Do not intend to return to teaching in DCPS.	45.5%
Unsure of intentions to return to teaching in DCPS.	38.6%

11. Current place of employment

In the field of education (non-teaching)	27.3%
Outside the field of education.	20.5%
Full-time teaching outside DCPS	25.0%
Not currently employed	15.9%

12. The extent to which specified factors contributed to resignation from full-time, DCPS classroom teaching

SCALE

1 = This greatly influenced my decision to resign from teaching in DCPS.
2
3 = This moderately influenced my decision to resign from teaching in DCPS.
4
5 = This did not influence my decision to resign from teaching in DCPS at all.

FACTORS

		1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
o	The public's perception of teaching as a low-status profession	04.5		11.4	11.4	72.7
o	Student discipline problems	13.6	04.5	18.2	06.8	56.8
o	Lack of support given to teachers by building administrators	20.9	14.0	18.6	07.0	39.5
o	Lack of support given to teachers by District-level administration	19.0	21.4	09.5	04.8	45.2
o	Lack of co-worker support in my school	14.0	07.0	11.6	04.7	62.8
o	Required non-instructional duties		14.0	18.6	14.0	53.5
o	Insufficient material resources/physical facilities	25.6	16.3	11.6	04.7	41.9
o	The limited salary schedule and other benefits	16.3	09.3	11.6	11.6	51.2

13. Major reason for planning to resign from DCPS teaching position

Dissatisfaction with salary schedule	04.5%
Low status of teaching as a profession	
Working conditions in DCPS	45.5%
Relocation outside the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.	18.2%
The District's residency requirements	02.3%
Family	02.3%
No intention to teach for more than a few years	11.4%
Wrong profession	06.8%
Other	09.1%

14. Most influential incentives to return to classroom teaching in DCPS

An increase in salary beyond current earnings	04.5
An appointment to teach on a part-time basis	09.1
An assignment to teach in a different school in DCPS	11.4
A reduction of the non-instructional duties	02.3
A waiver of the District's residency requirement	09.1
Tuition support for training	06.8
An improvement of the public's opinion of DCPS classroom teaching	
Nothing	25.0
Other	15.9

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